MARVEL

309

ZDARSKY
BACHALO

RATED T

PETER PARKER: THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN

TOWNSEND

PETER PARKER: THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN

Hey. Hey! Yeah, I'm talking to you. As far as I know, nothing exists outside of us two disembodied, comic-book recapping voices. I think we can agree things have gotten out of control here, yes?

Hmmm, I'm not sure what you mean? Spider-Man just saved the world from destruction, and now he's back to New York City and it's biz-as-yooge! J. Jonah Jameson is doing his best to help, but ah-hoo-ho-ho-hoh man! It's HARD to teach an old dog new tricks, you know what I'm saying? He's still all, "you're a menace, go to the hospital to menace Sandman, who's also a menace--"

Stop. Just stop. Who is this cavalier performance for?

Then it's a thwippity-thwip away to the beach! See, Sandman's consciousness lives in one grain of sand--BLAM! And lately, he's been losing control of the rest of his body--POW! And also having these flashes where he experiences life in the far distant future, after the end of the Earth and everything he knows--CHOOM! And a strange voice has been telling him to just let go... Zing... And then Spider-Man kept Sandman company while...swish...he drifted away on the wind for the last time...

Look, you're right. I'm trying to keep up appearances, but...what did that other voice mean when it said "it's my turn"? I'm worried...and just...sad.

CRACKED HOURGLASS – PART TWO

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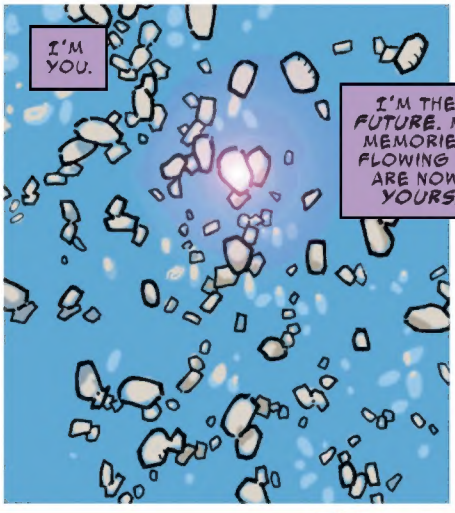
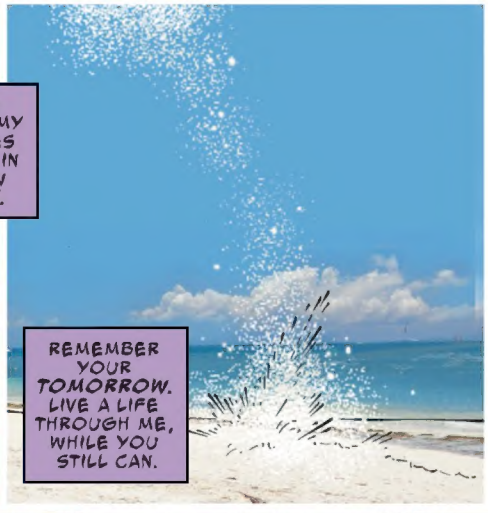
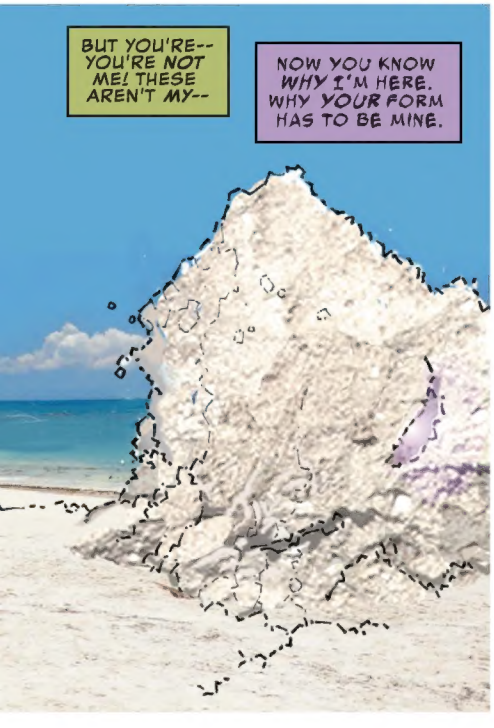
DON'T RESIST. IT WON'T HELP.
WHAT...WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHO ARE YOU? HOW ARE YOU IN MY--
CAN'T YOU FEEL IT?

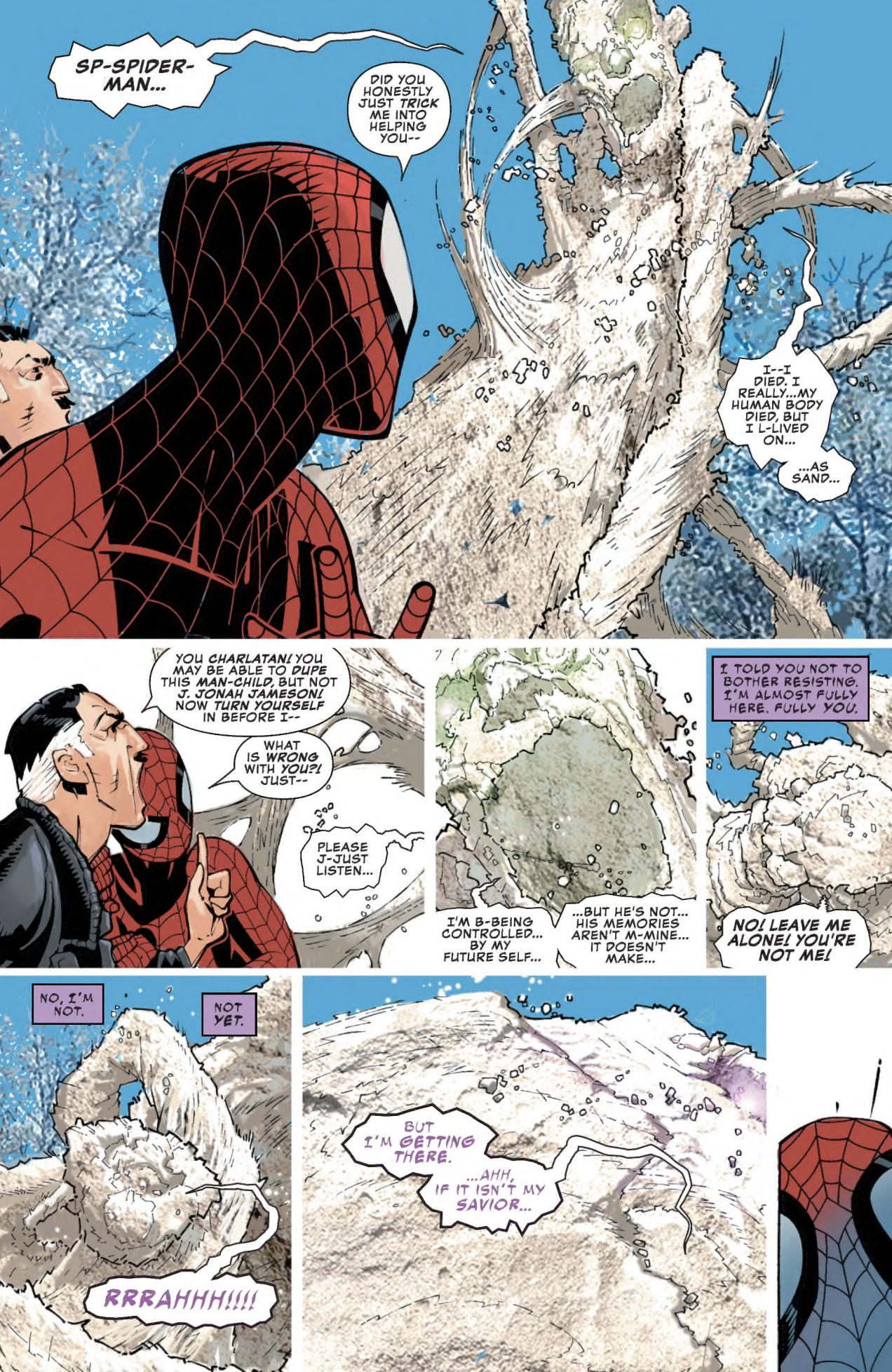

I'M YOU.
I'M THE FUTURE. MY MEMORIES FLOWING IN ARE NOW YOURS.


REMEMBER YOUR TOMORROW. LIVE A LIFE THROUGH ME, WHILE YOU STILL CAN.

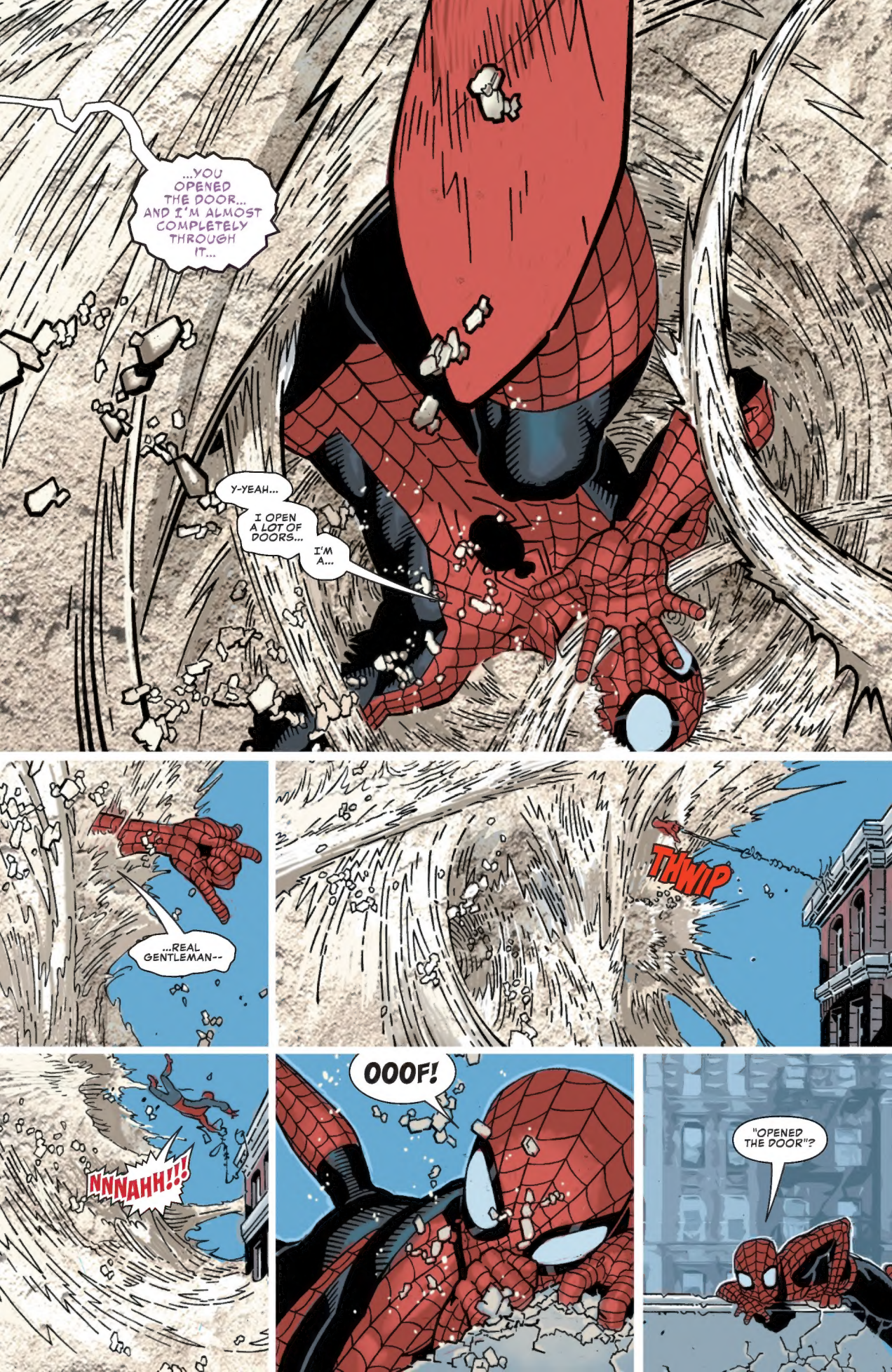

BUT YOU'RE-- YOU'RE NOT ME! THESE AREN'T MY--
NOW YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE. WHY YOUR FORM HAS TO BE MINE.

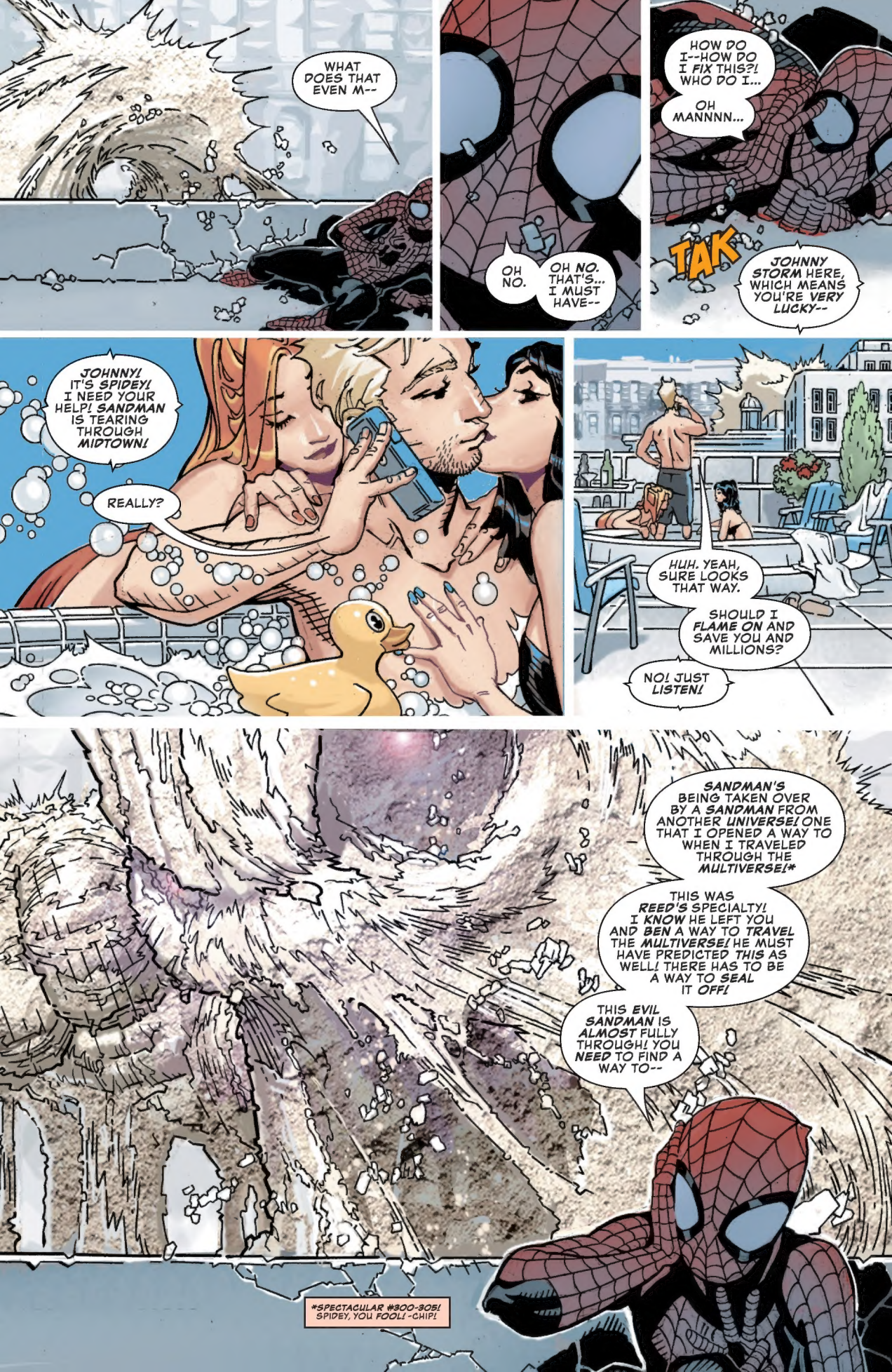
BECAUSE THERE IS NO OTHER CHOICE.

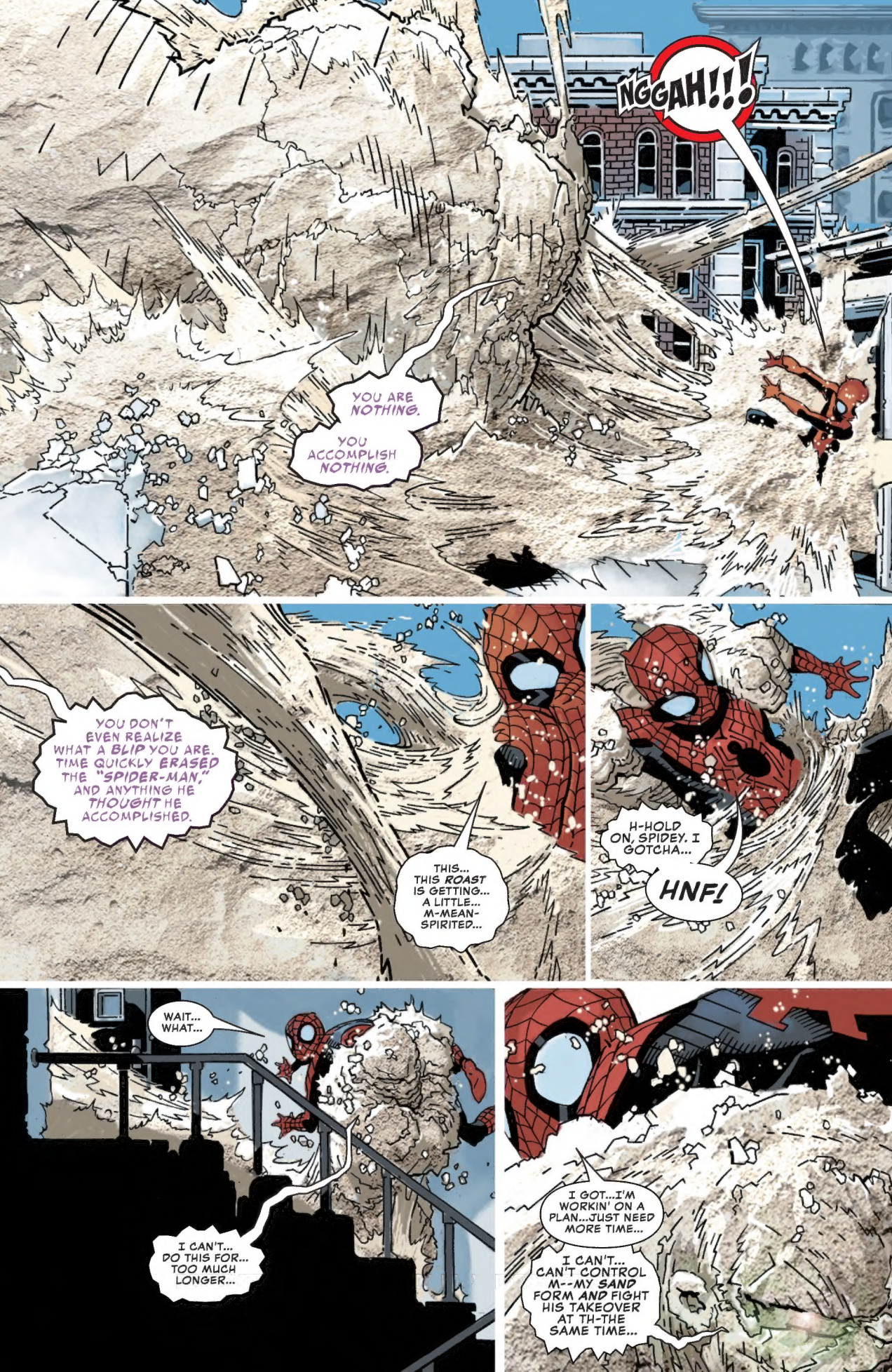
YOU--YOU--MENACE!
THERE'S THE JONAH I KNOW AND LOVE!
YOU LEFT ME OUT HERE AND HELPED THE SANDMAN ESCAPE?! MAYBE I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOU! MAYBE YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN IN LEAGUE WITH THESE--THESE VILLAINS!
OH MY GOD...
...SHUT! UP!
FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE! JUST--
HE'S DEAD, OKAY?! ARE YOU HAPPY?! I HELPED HIM LEAVE THE HOSPITAL SO HE COULD DIE THE WAY HE WANTED TO, NOT WAITING FOR--FOR COPS TO TRY AND TAKE HIM AWAY!
I KNOW YOU THINK MY LIFE, THIS ROLE, IS TO JUST BEAT UP SUPER VILLAINS, BUT IT CAN'T BE JUST THAT. IT'S--
I HAVE TO MAKE DECISIONS. ALL THE TIME. WHAT'S BEST, WHAT HELPS.
AND YEAH, THIS TIME IT WAS TO HELP ANOTHER HUMAN BEING FACE THEIR MORTALITY...AND...
...AND...
"OOOOH THE VILLAIN WAS DYING! HOW DO I KNOW? 'CAUSE HE TOLD ME SO!"
WHAT... HOW IS THIS...

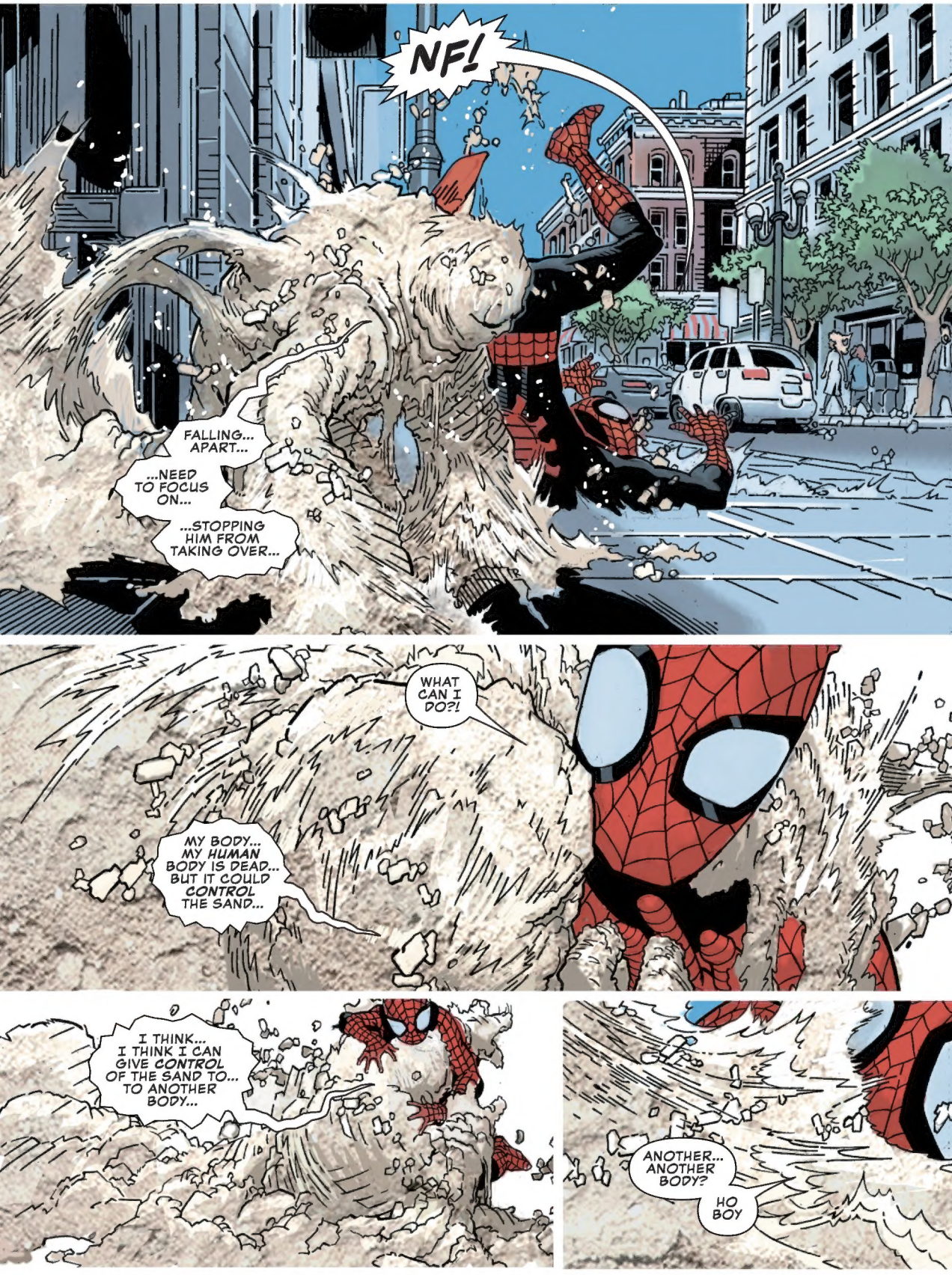

SP-SPIDER-MAN...
DID YOU HONESTLY JUST TRICK ME INTO HELPING YOU--
I--I DIED. I REALLY...MY HUMAN BODY DIED, BUT I L-LIVED ON...
...AS SAND...
YOU CHARLATAN! YOU MAY BE ABLE TO DUPE THIS MAN-CHILD, BUT NOT J. JONAH JAMESON! NOW TURN YOURSELF IN BEFORE I--
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?! JUST--
PLEASE J-JUST LISTEN...
I'M B-BEING CONTROLLED... BY MY FUTURE SELF...
...BUT HE'S NOT... HIS MEMORIES AREN'T M-MINE... IT DOESN'T MAKE...
I TOLD YOU NOT TO BOTHER RESISTING. I'M ALMOST FULLY HERE. FULLY YOU.
NO! LEAVE ME ALONE! YOU'RE NOT ME!
NO, I'M NOT.
NOT YET.
RRRAHHH!!!!
BUT I'M GETTING THERE.
...AHH, IF IT ISN'T MY SAVIOR...

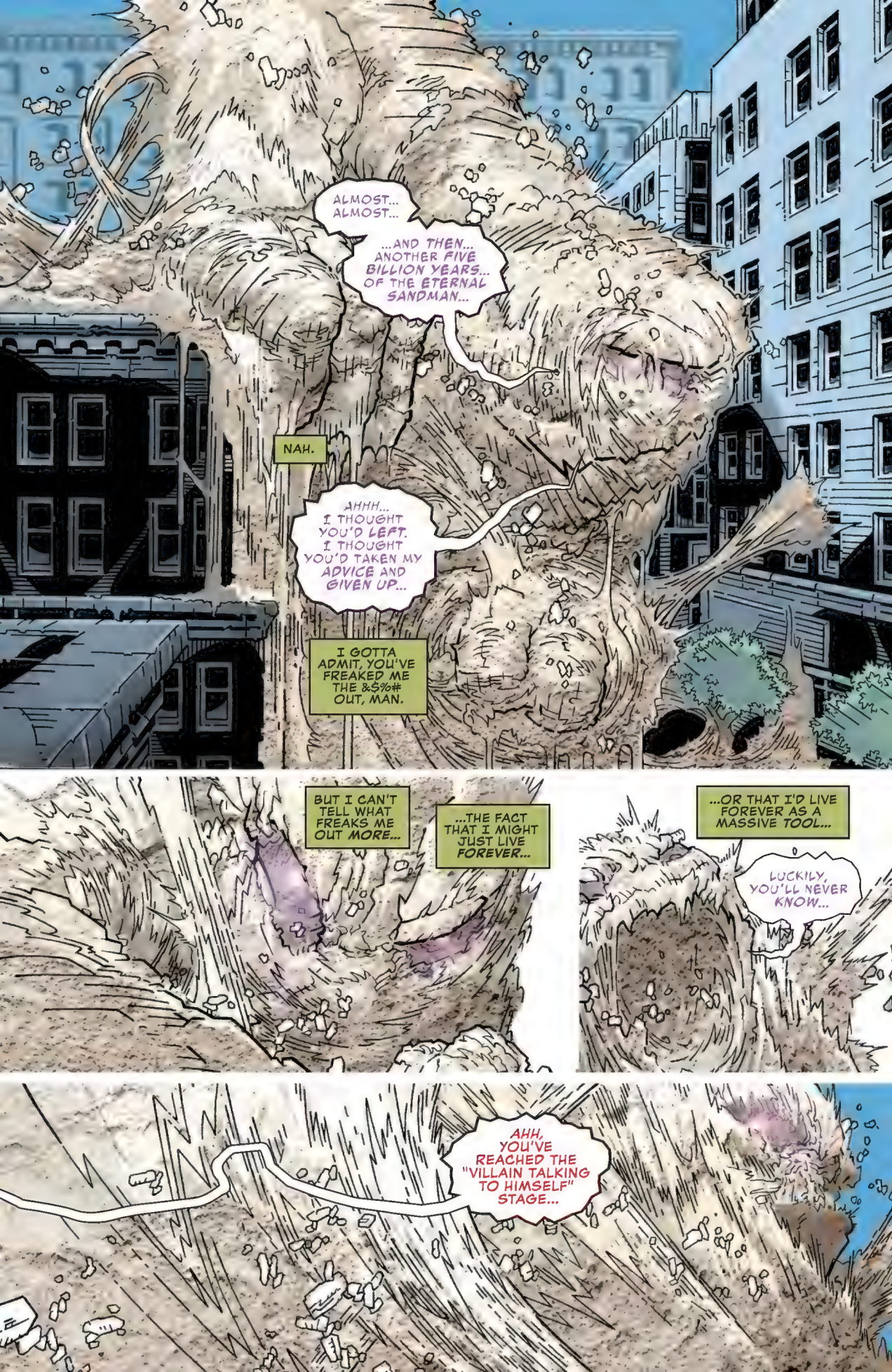
...THE SPIDER-MAN.
K-THWAK
NFF!!!
...JUST NOT MY SPIDER-MAN.
WHAT--WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHAT ARE YOU--
I ALMOST DIED, YOU KNOW. AT THE END OF THE UNIVERSE...
...BUT YOU DON'T LIVE FOR BILLIONS OF YEARS WITHOUT LEARNING A FEW TRICKS...
GRAHH!!!
THRAK
...SUCH AS HAVING MY CONSCIOUSNESS TRAVEL THROUGH THE UNENDING GRAIN OF SAND THAT MAKES US WHO WE ARE...
BUT I COULDN'T TRAVEL TO MY PAST. TIME TRAVEL. PARADOXES.
NHHH... M-MY SANDMAN NEVER TALKED THIS MUCH...
I HAVEN'T SPOKEN A HUMAN LANGUAGE IN FOUR BILLION YEARS, FORGIVE ME.
HNF!
NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOU, SPIDER-MAN...


...YOU OPENED THE DOOR... AND I'M ALMOST COMPLETELY THROUGH IT...
Y-YEAH...
I OPEN A LOT OF DOORS...
I'M A...
...REAL GENTLEMAN--
THWIP
NNNAHH!!!
OOOF!
"OPENED THE DOOR"?

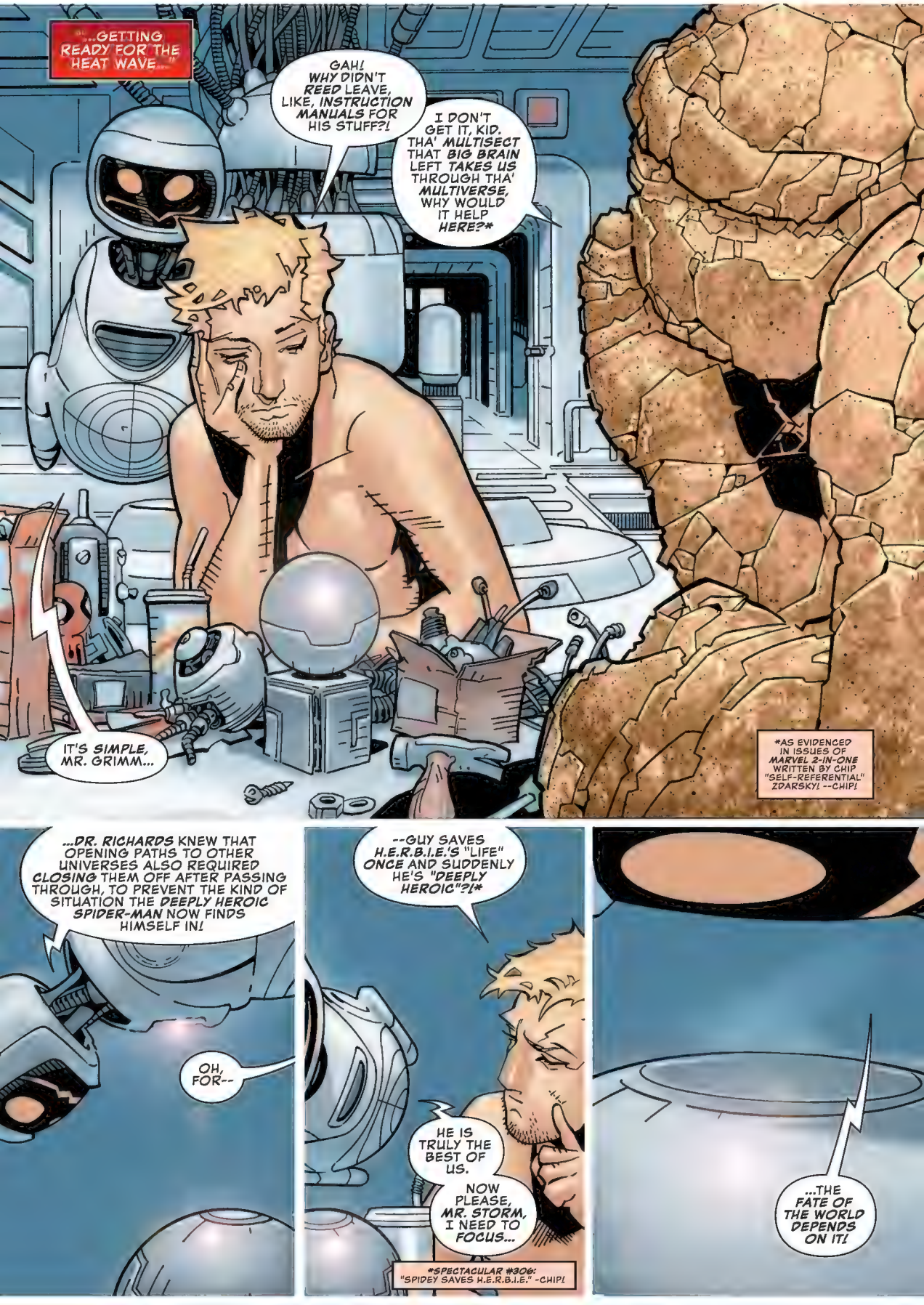

WHAT DOES THAT EVEN M--
OH NO.
OH NO. THAT'S... I MUST HAVE--
HOW DO I--HOW DO I FIX THIS?! WHO DO I...
OH MANNNN...
TAK
JOHNNY STORM HERE, WHICH MEANS YOU'RE VERY LUCKY--
JOHNNY! IT'S SPIDEY! I NEED YOUR HELP! SANDMAN IS TEARING THROUGH MIDTOWN!
REALLY?
HUH. YEAH, SURE LOOKS THAT WAY.
SHOULD I FLAME ON AND SAVE YOU AND MILLIONS?
NO! JUST LISTEN!
SANDMAN'S BEING TAKEN OVER BY A SANDMAN FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSE! ONE THAT I OPENED A WAY TO WHEN I TRAVELED THROUGH THE MULTIVERSE!*
THIS WAS REED'S SPECIALTY! I KNOW HE LEFT YOU AND BEN A WAY TO TRAVEL THE MULTIVERSE! HE MUST HAVE PREDICTED THIS AS WELL! THERE HAS TO BE A WAY TO SEAL IT OFF!
THIS EVIL SANDMAN IS ALMOST FULLY THROUGH! YOU NEED TO FIND A WAY TO--
*SPECTACULAR #300-305! SPIDEY, YOU FOOL! -CHIP!

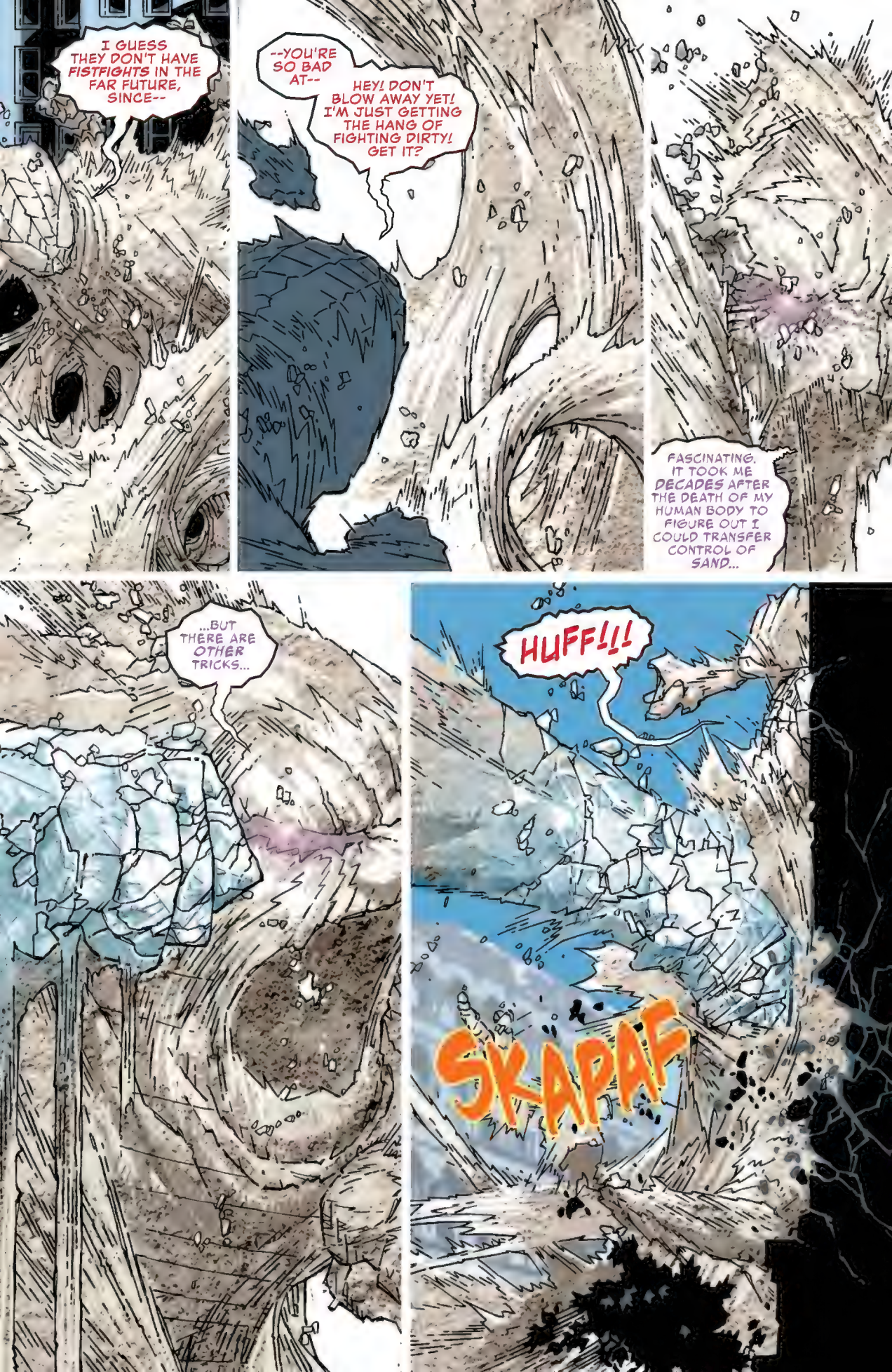

NGGAH!!!
YOU ARE NOTHING.
YOU ACCOMPLISH NOTHING.
YOU DON'T EVEN REALIZE WHAT A BLIP YOU ARE. TIME QUICKLY ERASED THE "SPIDER-MAN," AND ANYTHING HE THOUGHT HE ACCOMPLISHED.
THIS... THIS ROAST IS GETTING... A LITTLE... M-MEAN-SPIRITED...
H-HOLD ON, SPIDEY. I GOTCHA...
HNF!
WAIT... WHAT...
I CAN'T... DO THIS FOR... TOO MUCH LONGER...
I GOT...I'M WORKIN' ON A PLAN...JUST NEED MORE TIME...
I CAN'T... CAN'T CONTROL M--MY SAND FORM AND FIGHT HIS TAKEOVER AT TH-THE SAME TIME...

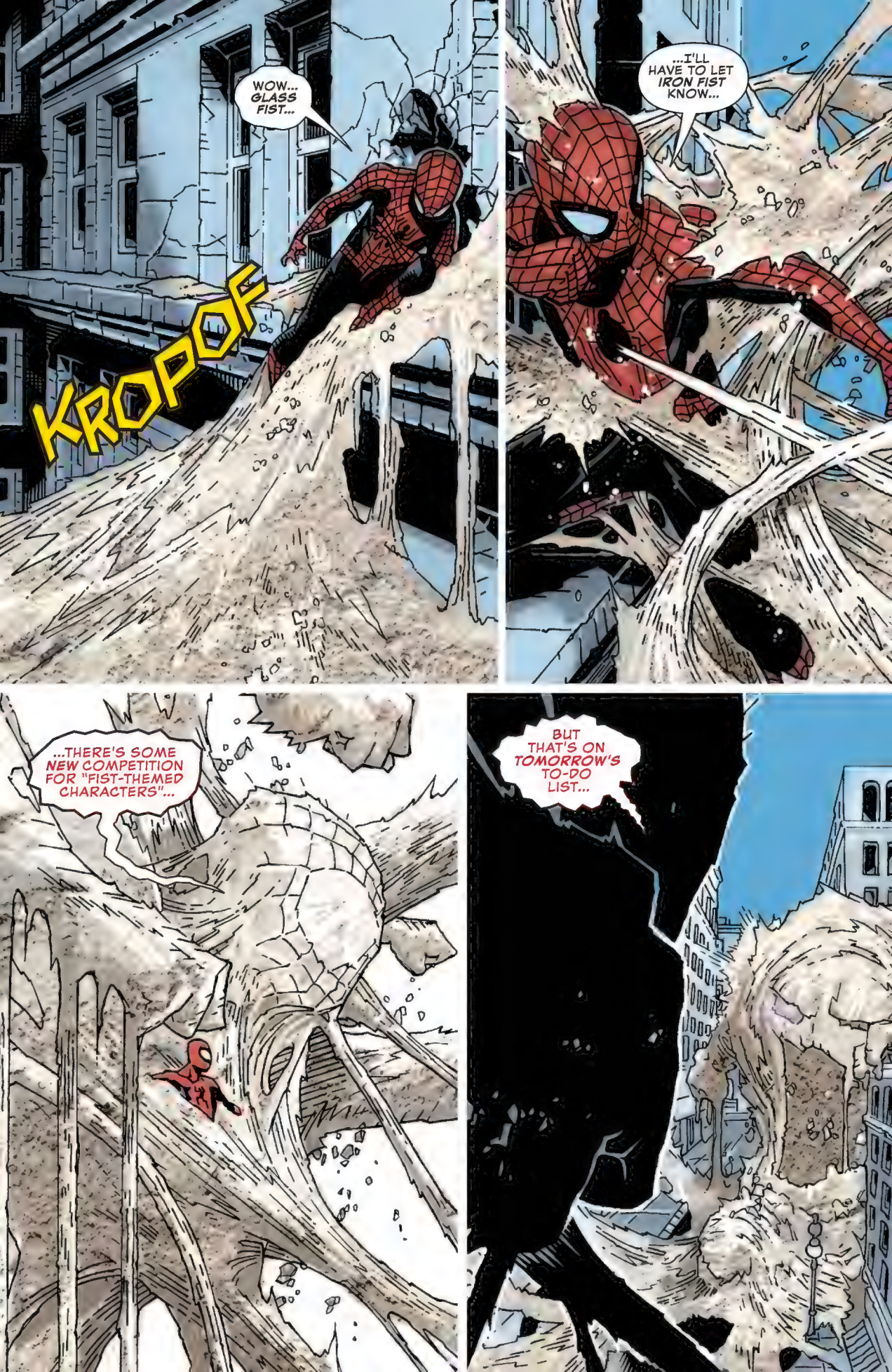

NF!
FALLING... APART...
...NEED TO FOCUS ON...
...STOPPING HIM FROM TAKING OVER...
WHAT CAN I DO?!
MY BODY... MY HUMAN BODY IS DEAD... BUT IT COULD CONTROL THE SAND...
I THINK... I THINK I CAN GIVE CONTROL OF THE SAND TO... TO ANOTHER BODY...
ANOTHER... ANOTHER BODY?
HO BOY

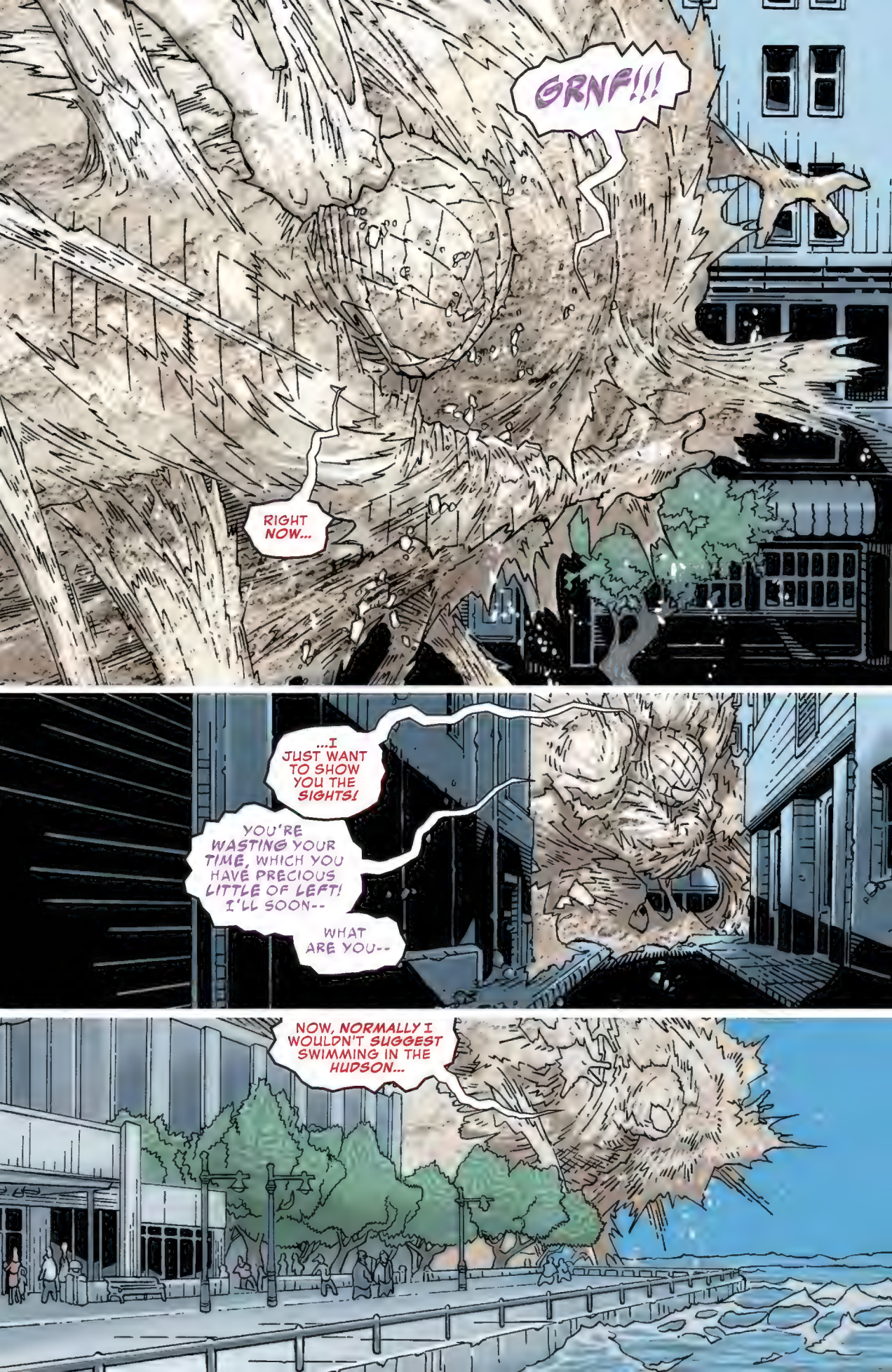

ALMOST... ALMOST...
...AND THEN... ANOTHER FIVE BILLION YEARS... OF THE ETERNAL SANDMAN...
NAH.
AHHH... I THOUGHT YOU'D LEFT. I THOUGHT YOU'D TAKEN MY ADVICE AND GIVEN UP...
I GOTTA ADMIT, YOU'VE FREAKED ME THE &$%# OUT, MAN.
BUT I CAN'T TELL WHAT FREAKS ME OUT MORE...
...THE FACT THAT I MIGHT JUST LIVE FOREVER...
...OR THAT I'D LIVE FOREVER AS A MASSIVE TOOL...
LUCKILY, YOU'LL NEVER KNOW...
AHH, YOU'VE REACHED THE "VILLAIN TALKING TO HIMSELF" STAGE...

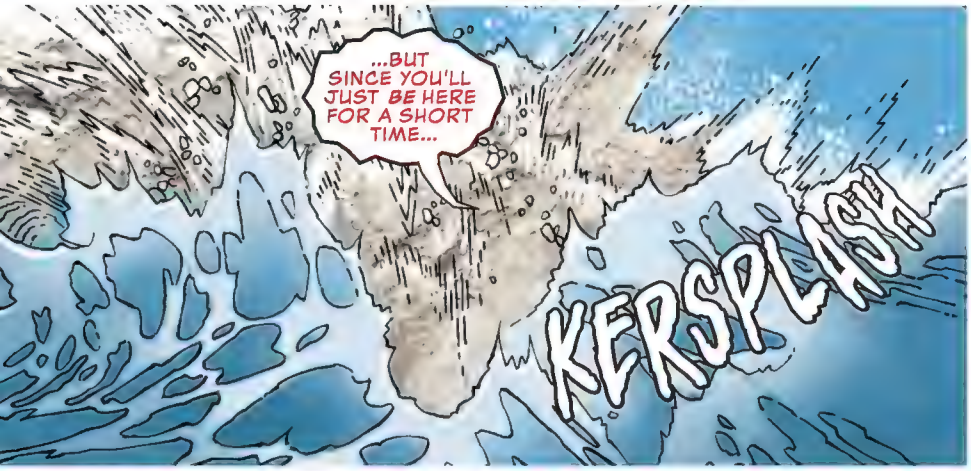
...WHICH MEANS YOU'RE READY FOR THE "VILLAIN CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING OH GOD MY PLAN MY PLAN" PHASE...
WHAT HAVE YOU--
JUST BEEN HITTIN' THE BEACH, BECOMING THE BEACH, YOU KNOW--
KRPAF

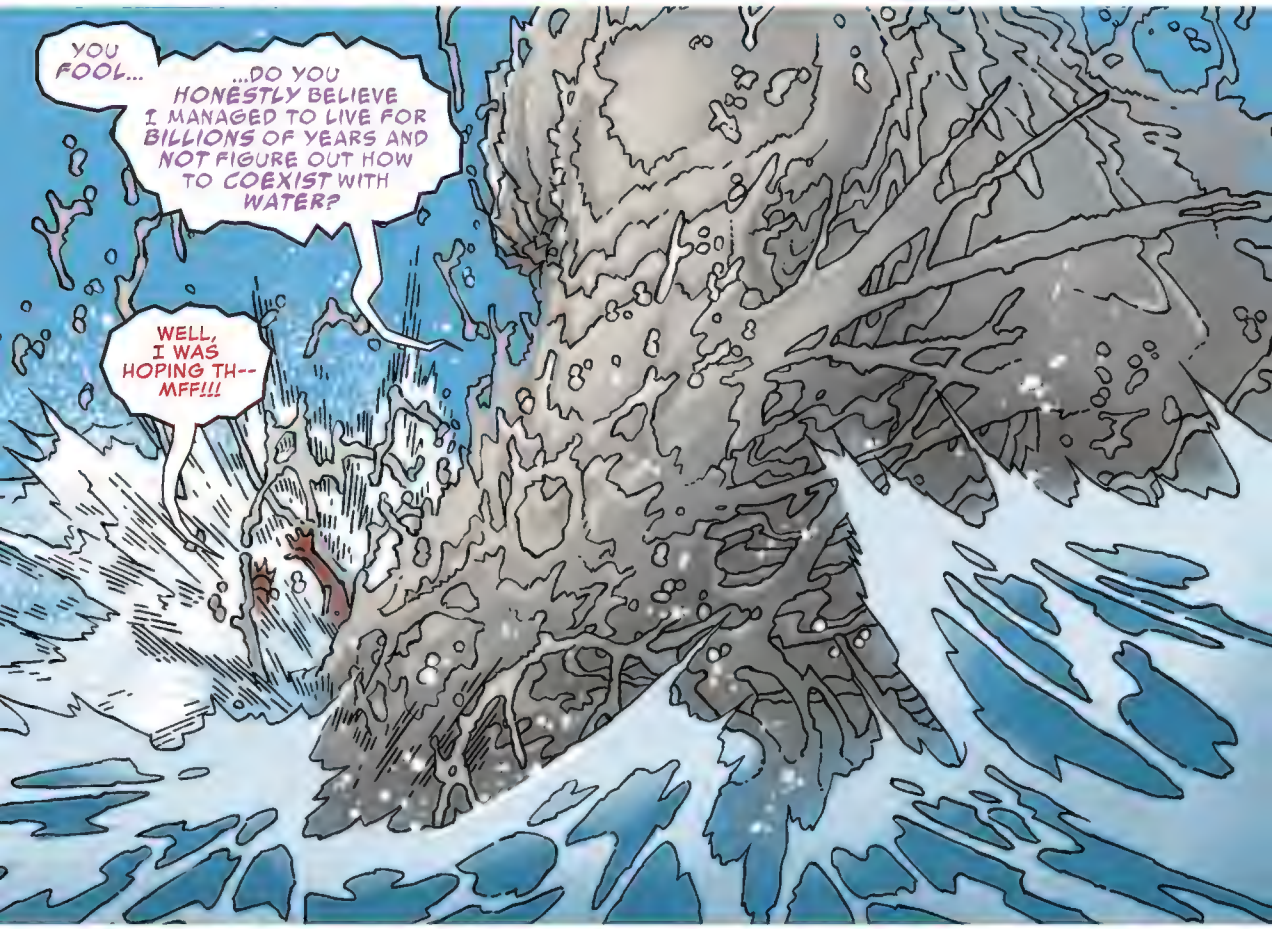

"...GETTING READY FOR THE HEAT WAVE..."
GAH! WHY DIDN'T REED LEAVE, LIKE, INSTRUCTION MANUALS FOR HIS STUFF?!
I DON'T GET IT, KID. THA' MULTISECT THAT BIG BRAIN LEFT TAKES US THROUGH THA' MULTIVERSE, WHY WOULD IT HELP HERE?*
IT'S SIMPLE, MR. GRIMM...
*AS EVIDENCED IN ISSUES OF MARVEL 2-IN-ONE WRITTEN BY CHIP "SELF-REFERENTIAL" ZDARSKY! --CHIP!
...DR. RICHARDS KNEW THAT OPENING PATHS TO OTHER UNIVERSES ALSO REQUIRED CLOSING THEM OFF AFTER PASSING THROUGH, TO PREVENT THE KIND OF SITUATION THE DEEPLY HEROIC SPIDER-MAN NOW FINDS HIMSELF IN!
OH, FOR--
--GUY SAVES H.E.R.B.I.E.'S "LIFE" ONCE AND SUDDENLY HE'S "DEEPLY HEROIC"?!*
HE IS TRULY THE BEST OF US.
NOW PLEASE, MR. STORM, I NEED TO FOCUS...
*SPECTACULAR #306: "SPIDEY SAVES H.E.R.B.I.E." -CHIP!
...THE FATE OF THE WORLD DEPENDS ON IT!


I GUESS THEY DON'T HAVE FISTFIGHTS IN THE FAR FUTURE, SINCE--
--YOU'RE SO BAD AT--
HEY! DON'T BLOW AWAY YET! I'M JUST GETTING THE HANG OF FIGHTING DIRTY! GET IT?
FASCINATING. IT TOOK ME DECADES AFTER THE DEATH OF MY HUMAN BODY TO FIGURE OUT I COULD TRANSFER CONTROL OF SAND...
...BUT THERE ARE OTHER TRICKS...
HUFF!!!
SKRAPAF


WOW... GLASS FIST...
KROPOF
...I'LL HAVE TO LET IRON FIST KNOW...
...THERE'S SOME NEW COMPETITION FOR "FIST-THEMED CHARACTERS"...
BUT THAT'S ON TOMORROW'S TO-DO LIST...

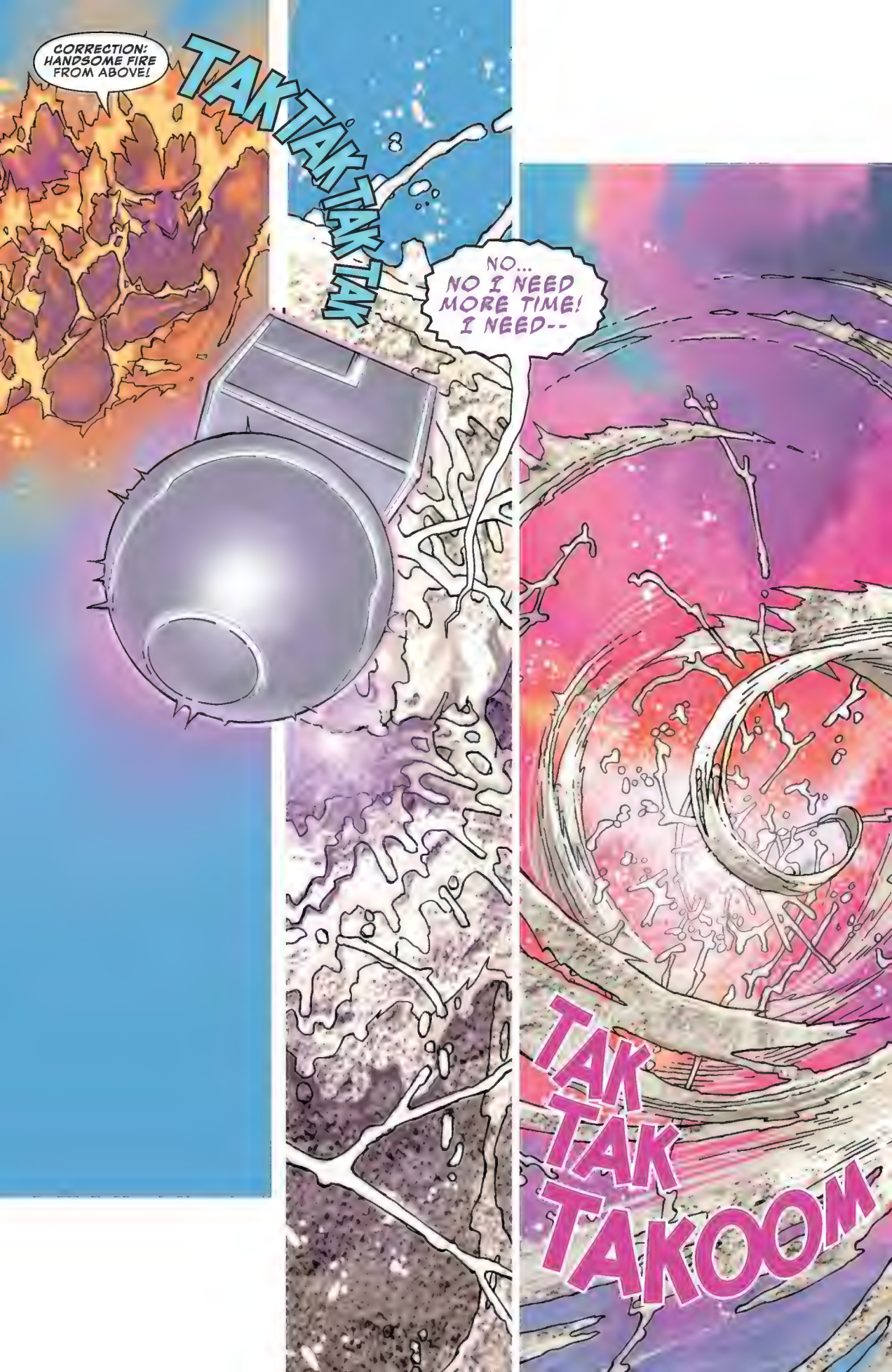

GRNF!!!
RIGHT NOW...
...I JUST WANT TO SHOW YOU THE SIGHTS!
YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, WHICH YOU HAVE PRECIOUS LITTLE OF LEFT! I'LL SOON--
WHAT ARE YOU--
NOW, NORMALLY I WOULDN'T SUGGEST SWIMMING IN THE HUDSON...

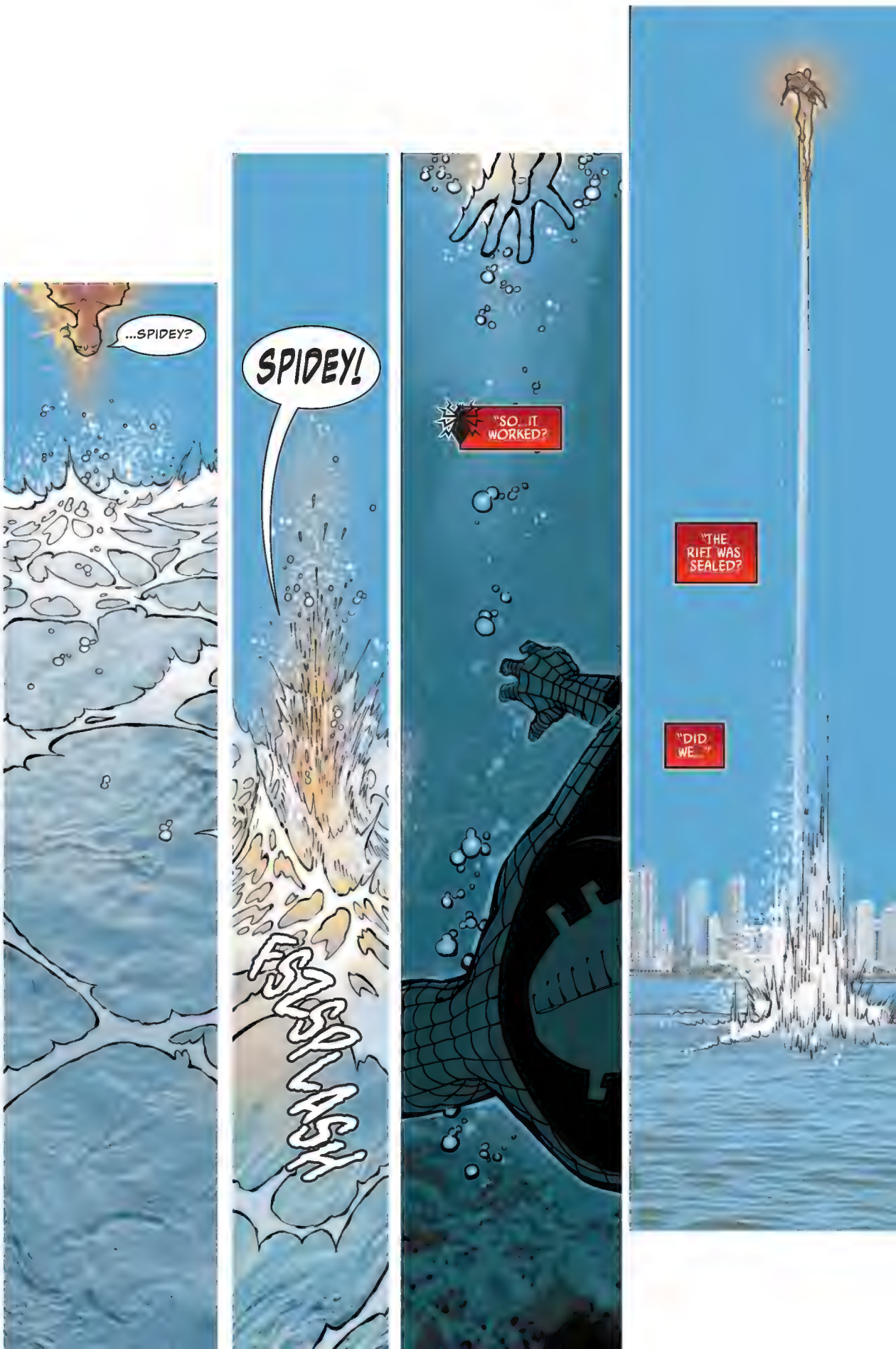

...BUT SINCE YOU'LL JUST BE HERE FOR A SHORT TIME...
KERSPLASH

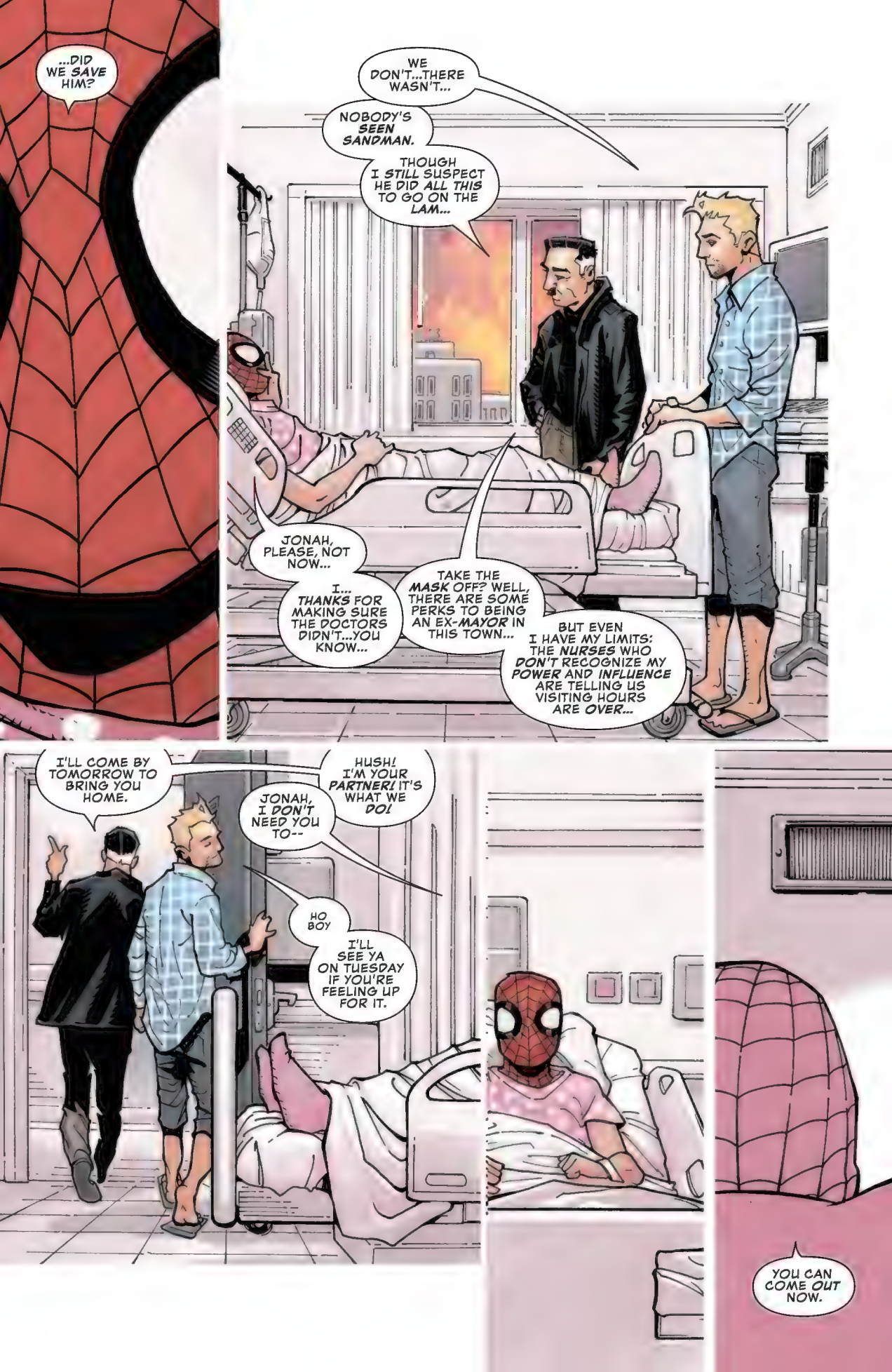

YOU FOOL...
...DO YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE I MANAGED TO LIVE FOR BILLIONS OF YEARS AND NOT FIGURE OUT HOW TO COEXIST WITH WATER?
WELL, I WAS HOPING TH--
MFF!!!

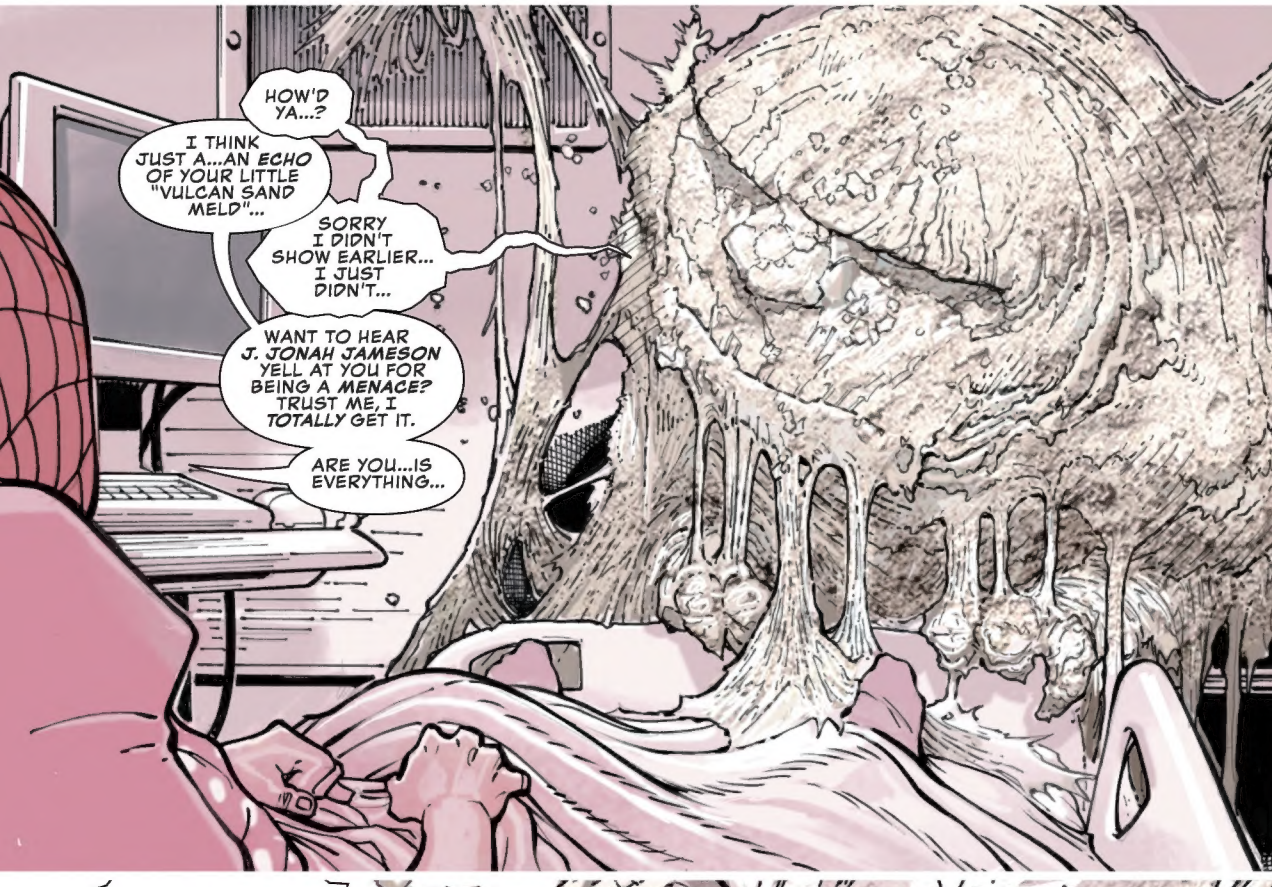
ERK!
IT'S OVER.
AND SO ARE YOU. IT'S A PLEASURE TO WATCH YOU DIE A SECOND TIME...

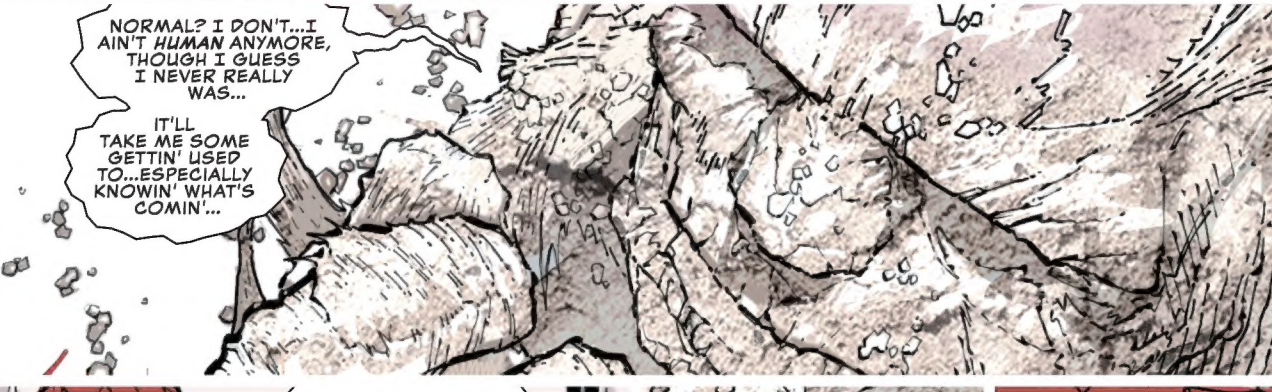
FIRE FROM ABOOOOOVE!


CORRECTION: HANDSOME FIRE FROM ABOVE!
TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK
NO... NO I NEED MORE TIME! I NEED--
TAK TAK TAKOOM


...SPIDEY?
SPIDEY!
SPLASH!
"SO... IT WORKED?
"THE RIFT WAS SEALED?
"DID WE..."

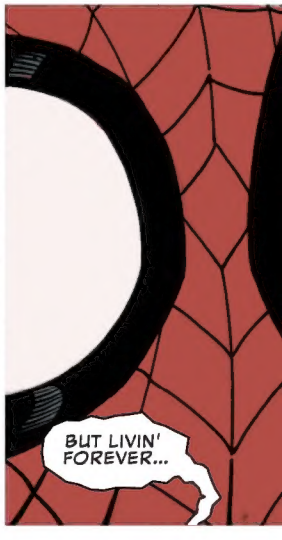

...DID WE SAVE HIM?
WE DON'T...THERE WASN'T...
NOBODY'S SEEN SANDMAN.
THOUGH I STILL SUSPECT HE DID ALL THIS TO GO ON THE LAM...
JONAH, PLEASE, NOT NOW...
I... THANKS FOR MAKING SURE THE DOCTORS DIDN'T...YOU KNOW...
TAKE THE MASK OFF? WELL, THERE ARE SOME PERKS TO BEING AN EX-MAYOR IN THIS TOWN...
BUT EVEN I HAVE MY LIMITS: THE NURSES WHO DON'T RECOGNIZE MY POWER AND INFLUENCE ARE TELLING US VISITING HOURS ARE OVER...
I'LL COME BY TOMORROW TO BRING YOU HOME.
JONAH, I DON'T NEED YOU TO--
HUSH! I'M YOUR PARTNER! IT'S WHAT WE DO!
HO BOY
I'LL SEE YA ON TUESDAY IF YOU'RE FEELING UP FOR IT.
YOU CAN COME OUT NOW.

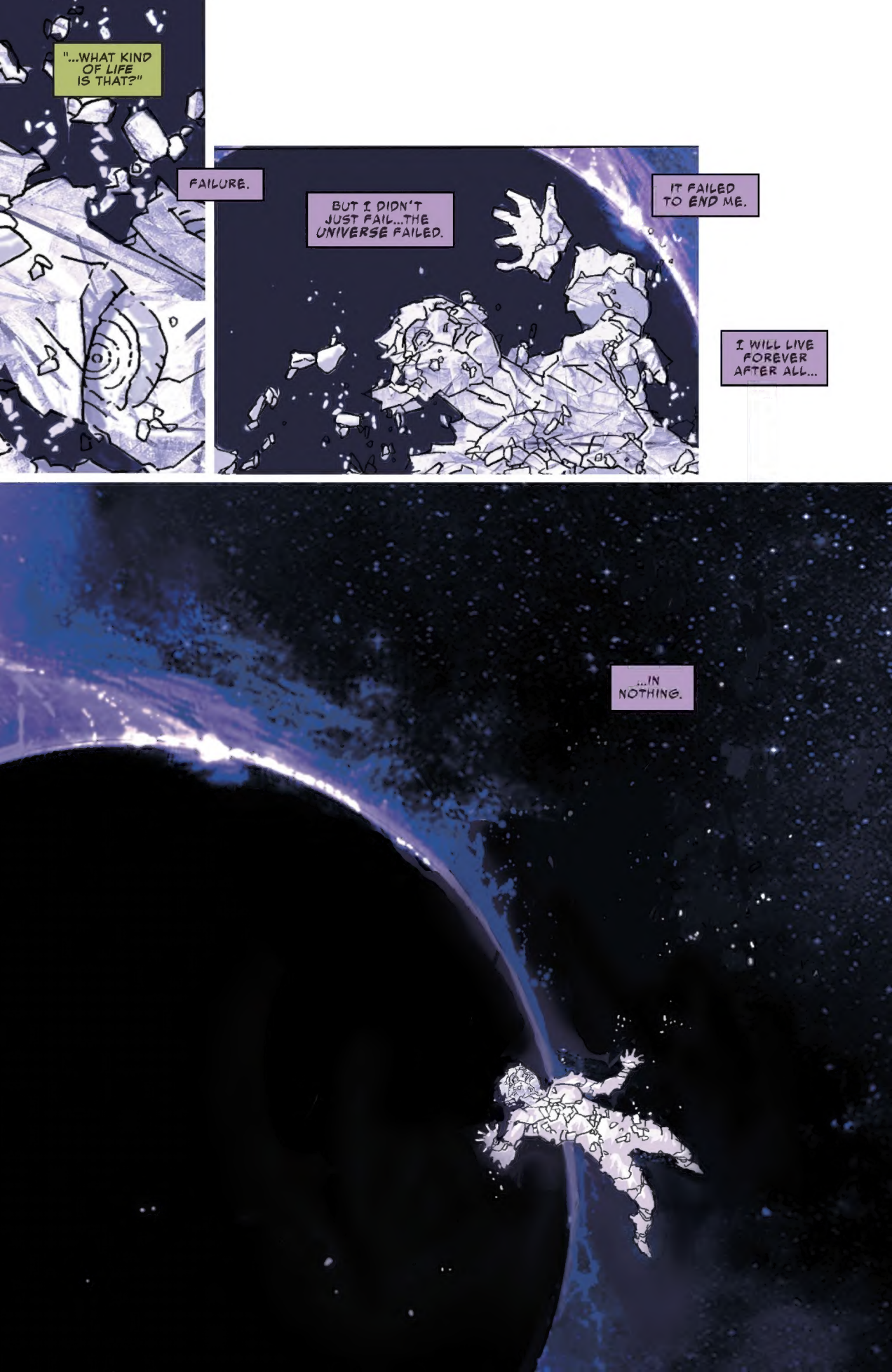

HOW'D YA...?
I THINK JUST A...AN *ECHO* OF YOUR LITTLE "VULCAN SAND MELD"...
SORRY I DIDN'T SHOW EARLIER... I JUST DIDN'T...
WANT TO HEAR *J. JONAH JAMESON* YELL AT YOU FOR BEING A *MENACE?* TRUST ME, I *TOTALLY* GET IT.
ARE YOU...IS EVERYTHING...


NORMAL? I DON'T...I AIN'T *HUMAN* ANYMORE, THOUGH I GUESS I NEVER REALLY WAS...
IT'LL TAKE ME SOME GETTIN' USED TO...ESPECIALLY KNOWIN' WHAT'S COMIN'...

=NFF= YOU DON'T *KNOW* WHAT'S COMING! TRUST ME, I'VE SEEN ENOUGH "ALTERNATE FUTURES" TO KNOW--
YEAH, *BUT*--
I NEVER THOUGHT I COULD LIVE FOREVER...

IT'S... IT'S *SCARY,* MAN...
THINGS *MEAN* SOMETHING WHEN YOU CAN DIE.


BUT LIVIN' FOREVER...


"...WHAT KIND OF LIFE IS THAT?"
FAILURE.
BUT I DIDN'T JUST FAIL...THE UNIVERSE FAILED.
IT FAILED TO END ME.
I WILL LIVE FOREVER AFTER ALL...
...IN NOTHING.

MARVEL LEGACY DON'T MISS

PETER PARKER: THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #310

Variant cover by CHIP ZDARSKY!

LET US KNOW HOW WE'RE DOING! Send e-mail to SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM (please mark "OKAY TO PRINT").

AN OROBOROS
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